

# TOWN OF SUFFIELD

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Town of Suffield Braves Difficult Conversations in New Inclusivity Speaker Series

SUFFIELD, Conn. – The Town of Suffield tackles the topics of anti-racism, gender equality, access and ability, religious and cultural expression in a speaker series slated to kick off on February 6, 2021. The virtual format features both scholars and authors presenting via talks, panels and discussions. A moderated town-hall style forum serves as the culminating event and includes the speakers as panelists addressing feedback from the series (date pending). Suffield First Selectwoman Melissa M. Mack said, “This series is long overdue and I’m optimistic about the important conversations it will foster that will lead to better understanding and enrichment in our community.” Open to the public and free of charge, anyone interested can sign up at [www.suffieldct.gov/our-town/inclusivity](http://www.suffieldct.gov/our-town/inclusivity).

The series marks a continuation of efforts initiated by Mack and outlined in a [letter dated July 9, 2020](#) regarding inclusivity in Suffield which stated, “We all agree that our tight-knit town embodies a wonderful sense of compassion and community. . . . [but] We can all do better.” On October 7, 2020, the Board of Selectmen followed with a unanimously approved statement: “The Town of Suffield is committed to fair and respectful treatment of all people, enhancement and promotion of inclusivity and diversity, and elimination of racism, discrimination and bias.” Suffield Youth Services Director Kate Powers and Kent Memorial Library Director Garrett Pinder spearheaded the event.

Scheduled dates, speakers and topics follow.

**February 6 at 11am: Galen Adbur-Razzaq**, Educator and accomplished musician

**Topic:** Jazz and the Civil Rights Era, a lecture and jazz performance, providing an understanding and appreciation for the art form, cultural background, and historical significance.

**February 11 at 7pm: Surbhi Patel**, Executive Director, Student Academic Support Services at Bay Path & **Shannon Knall**, Special Education Advocate

**Topic:** Living Real Lives, a discussion on understanding and advocating for disability services for our children and loved ones.

**February 24 at 7pm: Ellie Krug**, national speaker, transgender writer and “human inclusionist”

**Topic:** Gray Area Thinking, a highly valued inclusivity training that offers an easy-to-understand toolset on how to be more welcoming to anyone.

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**March 6 at 1pm: Dr. Yadilette Rivera-Colón**, Professor, Board Member of Girls Inc.

**Topic:** Against All Odds, exploring why there are so few girls and women in STEM and what we can do to help others see careers for themselves in STEM.

**March 11 at 7pm: Janine Fondon**, Professor, President and CEO of UnityFirst

**Topic:** Six Degrees of Separation, helping us understand and feel more comfortable having difficult conversations with our family and friends, and how to build back bridges during such a divisive time.

**March 25 at 7pm: Mike Curato**, Award-winning Author and Artist of *Flamer* & **Crystal**

**Maldonado**, Debut Young Adult Author of *Fat Chance*, *Charlie Vega*

**Topic:** Intersecting Identities, an author panel discussing their newest books, and discussing how different parts of who we are all add up to one incredible person.

**April 6 at 7pm: Debby Irving**, Author of *Waking Up White*

**Topic:** I'm a Good Person! Isn't That Enough?, Helping us explore why our town should care about racism, how to be an ally, an anti-racist, and how to talk to kids about racism.

### **About Suffield**

The Town of Suffield is a quintessential New England town boasting a population of 16,600. The many people who serve Suffield through town government - as employees and volunteers alike - remain committed to developing and fostering a strong sense of community among its residents. More information about the Town of Suffield is available at [www.suffieldct.gov](http://www.suffieldct.gov).

For additional questions, contact Kate Powers (860) 668-3329 or Garrett Pinder (860) 668-3896.

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